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ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S
ANNUAL REPORT

for 1949

July, 1949

ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1949

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1949, on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the Alford Urban District. I am pleased to be able to report once again that the general health in Alford has been good throughout the year and that except for two cases the town has been free from notifiable diseases. The steady improvement in sanitary conditions has continued.

The National Health Act which came into force the previous year is now working smoothly but has, now that all treatment and medicines are free, involved the local Practitioners and the Chemists in considerable increase in work. The Act has also caused various changes in the visiting Consultants to the hospital and the local Medical men do not now practice Major Surgery. All medical men in the town are co-operating in the working of the Act.

The year 1949 started with a mild winter and this was followed by a sunny and dry spring, summer and autumn, to the benefit of those people who were able to spend their leisure out of doors. The economic condition of the country did not permit of much relaxation of the severe rationing of foodstuffs to which we have all become so much accustomed, but there is no evidence that the health of the people of Alford has suffered as a result of these restrictions.

Vital Statistics.

The area of the district is 1,138 acres.

The estimated population of the town is 2,220.

The Rateable Value is £10,327 and the value of a penny rate is £41 14s. 9d.

The number of inhabited houses is 811.

The births numbered 30—12 male and 18 female. This represents a birthrate of 13.5 per thousand of the population. The corresponding figure for the whole of England and Wales was 16.7. The figure of 30 includes 3 illegitimate births. There was one still-birth.

The deaths numbered 29—9 male and 20 female. This represents a deathrate per thousand of the population of 13

compared with 11.7 for the whole country. There was one death in children under one year. It was due to congenital trouble. This gives a deathrate per thousand live births of 33 compared with 32 for the whole of England and Wales. Of the 29 deaths—6 were due to cancer, 12 to diseases of the heart and circulatory system, 4 to intracranial vascular diseases, 2 to bronchitis, 1 to pneumonia, 1 to influenza and 2 to other causes. There were no deaths due to road accidents or other violent cause.

General Provision of Health Services.

Laboratory examinations are carried out at the Public Laboratory Service at Lincoln. Water analyses by Messrs. W. W. Taylor, of Nottingham.

Midwifery and Nursing services are unchanged. The Alford Memorial Hospital under the Health Act is in the Grimsby Hospital Group. Maternity cases are only admitted to hospital for first confinements or if abnormal or if the home conditions are so unsatisfactory as to be a risk to mother or child. Maternity cases are not admitted to the Alford Memorial Hospital.

Infectious diseases, if requiring hospital treatment, are sent to Scarthoe Isolation Hospital if beds are available, otherwise to Lincoln or where room can be found. Osgodby and Skegness hospitals are not now available as the former is now a Convalescent Home and the latter closed. It is regrettable that there is no nearer accommodation as it is a long way for relatives to go to visit.

SCABIES. I have had no cases reported to me during the year.

VENEREAL DISEASES. A clinic for the treatment of these diseases is in operation at Skegness. Treatment is, of course, free and strictly confidential. No cases were reported to me during 1949.

DIPHTHERIA. Immunisation is now carried out under the direction of the County Authorities but is mainly done by the local practitioners. During the year 16 children under 5 years and 3 aged 5-15 were protected by immunisation, and 9 were given "Booster" injections. I should like once again to impress on all parents the great importance of having their children protected against Diphtheria. It has been estimated that if 80% of all children were immunised this disease, so fatal to children, would become negligible.

VACCINATION. During 1949 only 6 children received primary vaccination against Smallpox. It is regrettable that since compulsory powers have been done away with the number of children being treated has fallen so low. With the advent of universal aviation the risk of infection in this country has greatly increased.

TUBERCULOSIS. One new case of this disease was reported during the year. There were no deaths from this cause.

PUPERAL DISEASES. There were no cases in 1949 and no deaths from any maternal cause.

PREVALENCE OF DISEASE. The general health of the Town was good and there was very little in the way of infectious fevers. At the beginning of the year there was a considerable amount of influenza and one death from that cause. At the end of the year there were a number of cases of Chickenpox amongst the children and many sore throats at all ages.

WATER. The Town's water supply continues to be excellent in quality and quantity. Regular monthly analyses were taken throughout the year. Altogether 11 houses and other premises were connected to the town mains. There was no further extension of mains during 1949, the whole District being now covered.

HOUSING. No Council or privately-built houses were completed during 1949. It is proposed to build 16 Council houses in the near future. The Council now owns 93 permanent houses.

SEWERAGE. The sewage disposal works have proved quite efficient, and I am pleased to note that we have had no complaints of offensive smells from that source in spite of the fact that most of the year was very dry and hot. During the year 5 premises were connected to the sewerage system. There are, however, still 44 privy vaults and 283 pan-closets in Alford. It is the intention of the Council to insist on the removal of all vaults and pan-closets by voluntary action on the part of owners or, where necessary, by the taking of compulsory powers. A start has been made in this direction. The scheme will take some time to complete, but when this has been done it will bring the sanitary matters of the Town to a high state of efficiency and be a great saving in manpower.

ICE CREAM. There are now 5 premises registered for the sale of ice cream and of these 2 are for its manufacture also. These premises have all been inspected during the year and samples taken for testing.

COWSHEDS. There are still 5 registered cowsheds in the Urban District. They were all inspected and found to be satisfactory. There were no new registrations.

SQUATTERS. There are still 13 huts in the station camp occupied by squatters. All are supplied with water, sewerage and electricity, and the families are happy and contented.

I have the honour to be, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant.

C. S. E. WRIGHT,
Medical Officer of Health.